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Parents of murder victims share tragic story with MCTC inmates

By ERIN JULIUS (erinj@herald-mail.com)

Warren Lupson holds a photo while Pat Lupson describes the murder of their daughter and grandsons 15 years ago. They gave a presentation Wednesday to an audience of inmates at Maryland Correctional and Training Center. (Kevin G. Gilbert/Staff Photographer)



Pat Lupson describes the murder of her daughter and grandsons 15 years ago to an audience of inmates Wednesday at Maryland Correctional and Training Center. (Kevin G. Gilbert/Staff Photographer)



WASHINGTON COUNTY — About 150 men crowded into a small chapel Wednesday afternoon and listened intently as a mother talked about the tragic 1993 murder of her daughter and two grandsons.

Some of the men were clean-shaven, others wore their hair in dreadlocks and many displayed tattooed arms and necks.

All are prisoners at the Maryland Correctional Training Center south of Hagerstown.

Pat Lupson travels to institutions around the country, telling prisoners about the night that her daughter and grandsons died in a house fire set by her son-in-law.

On Wednesday, Lupson and her husband, Warren, were at MCTC as part of National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

"It really touched me," said Amefika Brown, 30, who has served 10 years in prison. Inmates start thinking about their victims when they start working on themselves and evaluating themselves, Brown said.

The Lupsons' presentation "stirred up some emotions," he said.

Lupson's daughter, Gina, met and married the man who eventually would set fire to their home. He beat and choked Gina, but she kept allowing him back into their home, Lupson said.

One day, "he poured gasoline in front of the couch, up the stairs, up to her bedroom," Lupson said. "He lit a match and walked out of that house."

Not only were four lives destroyed - the three who died and the one who has been ordered to spend the rest of his life in an institution - but a "ripple effect" has affected so many others, Lupson said.

She and her husband no longer have their daughter. Her son no longer has a sister. The killer's family has a son who lives in a small cell.

"Your families are also your victims," she said.

Conrad Thomas, 23, who has served more than four years in prison, thought Pat Lupson's talk was excellent.

"For the average person who has a heart, I truly think this will change how inmates see things," he said.

Lupson read to the inmates a letter she wrote to her daughter and grandsons about four months after their deaths.



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Warren Lupson lowers a crabapple sapling into the ground in front of Maryland Correctional Training Center Wednesday with help from Warden Ken Horning. Lupson and his wife, Pat, later presented to an audience of inmates a program describing the murders of their daughter and grandsons. (Kevin G. Gilbert/Staff Photographer)

"People die, love doesn't," one portion of the letter read.

If one inmate decided to never again pick up a gun or raise a hand in anger, her presentation was worth it, Lupson told the offenders.

The Lupsons took questions from the inmates, many of whom offered condolences for the family's loss. One asked whether they forgave their daughter's killer. They said no because their son-in-law has not admitted to torching the family's home and has not apologized.

A man serving life in prison thanked the couple.

"We all need to hear that," he said. Their presentation "was a blessing."

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